

THE 4474 h 32
PRAYER of AGUR,

ILLUSTRATED IN
A FUNERAL DISCOURSE:
AND THE
ADVANTAGES RESULTING
FROM AN
EARLY and STEDFAST PIETY.
PREACHED EXTEMPORE,

By the Author of Two DISCOURSES and a PRAYER.

Publickly delivered at the QUAKER's Yearly-
Meeting, in BRISTOL.

The whole taken down in CHARACTERS

By a Member of the Church of *England*.

B R I S T O L.

Printed and sold by S. FARLEY, in Castle-Green; also sold at No. 6,
in Redcross-street; by Messrs. NEWBERRY and CARNAN, DODS-
LEY, CADELL, and HIND, in London; Mr. FREDERICK, in Bath;
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THE general encouragement given to the *Two Discourses and a Prayer*, publickly deliver'd at the Quaker's yearly meeting in Bristol; the encomiums pass'd upon them in the *Critical and Monthly Reviews*; which are the most approved, if not the only public testimonies given of the value of any work, offer'd to the consideration of the public from the press; and the many copies bespoke of the following Sermons, &c. already taken notice of in a preface to those discourses; are the real motives which have occasioned the publication of these, literally taken down as they flow'd from the lips of the same eminent preacher: And that they may become equally acceptable to Readers of every Persuasion; and tend to the general promotion of true religion and virtue, is the sincere wish of,

The EDITOR.

BRISTOL, Feb. 1,
1768.



*The following Sermon was delivered at the Fryers Meeting
in Bristol, on Friday the 22d Day of May, 1767.*

 HAVE frequently thought, and the sentiment hath
been confirmed from my own observation and ex-
perience, that a great and excellent point would
be gain'd, highly conducive to the advantage of
mankind, did they generally, tho' from no surer guide than
tradition, subscribe with heart and mind, to that certain truth,
recorded in holy writ ;

" Verily, there is a reward for the righteous : Verily he is
a God, that judgeth in the earth ;"*

As such a persuasion, from whatever ground it arises,
naturally tends to influence the conduct, to avoid evil, and to
pursue that which is good ; and with regard to many, it hath
proved a step to their nearer acquaintance with God, who is
the only sure guide to true happiness.

INDEED I scarce think there can be many, if there be any,
who are hardy enough to deny the existence of the supreme
Being ; but believe on the contrary, that many, through the
divine favour enlighten'd to see their duty, and assisted to dis-
charge it ; do, in consequence of these favours, contemplate,
with satisfaction inexpressible, these attributes of the most
high

* Psalm lviii, 11,

high God, here mentioned by the Psalmist : and could I be induced to think, that any part of mankind had swerv'd from their duty, for want of a firm conviction of those his attributes, as relative to his creatures ; and of the certainty, that there is really a God who judgeth the earth : I say, could I believe their minds were destitute of this animating and enlivening prospect of his power, omniscience, and goodness, in his superintendant care, and present judging the earth, I should deem such but a very little remov'd, if any, from the state of the *Athenians*, upon whose altars the holy apostle discover'd an inscription,

* "*To the unknown God.*"

Indeed a language that was spoken formerly hath been too much adopted by succeeding generations ; numbers of whom have been like those men of Jerusalem, who said, *† the Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil*. Many (seduced by the grand deceiver and his agents) have endeavour'd to estrange and withdraw themselves from the arbitrator of the whole earth : they have hence grown dark in their imaginations, and in like manner thus reasoned with themselves, "He will do us no good, why therefore should we seek him ? he will do us no harm ; why should we fear him ?" This, we may justly look upon, as the most unhappy seduction of mind ! as it misleads to the utmost distance, (without timely recovery) from that state of obedience, in which we are only capable of happiness, through the favourable notice of our father who is in heaven.

BUT we may justly conclude, that such impiety past not the attention of an all-seeing God, in as much as he reply'd, "I
"will

* Acts xvii, 23. † Zeph. i. 12.

“ will punish those men of Jerusalem, who have said, The
 “ Lord doeth us no good, why should we seek him? he will
 “ not do us any harm, why should we fear him ?”

THE certainty of his superintendency, hath continued to be the happiness of all the wise and good in all ages, and it is these, and only these, that discern wherein true happiness consists. Hence hath it become, and still remains, an established glorious truth, accompanied with, and confirm'd by, the voice of all generations.

UNDER this head in particular, a Petition or Prayer that was put up to him who hath created the earth, and assigned a reward to the righteous, by *Agur* the son of *Jaketh*, hath appeared to my mind, as necessary at this day to be adopted by every individual, who is desirous of living to the best, wisest, and happiest purpose of life ; without which they had better never have lived : And I cannot but recommend it most particularly to *You*, the rising generation, whose minds I trust are at times susceptible of proper impressions, who are not become slaves to the vanity and lusts of the world : and indeed it seems like the language of one that is entering upon the stage of life : * *Two things have I required of thee, deny me them not before I die ! Remove far from me vanity and lies ; give me neither poverty nor riches ; feed me with food convenient for me ; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord ? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain !*

THE substance of this memorable requisition hath appear'd to my mind, during the course of a long series of observations of men, and times ; with regard to its import in point of religion,

* Prov. xxx, 7, 8, 9,

religion, virtue, the love and peace of God; as including indeed, all that is good and necessary for our safe conduct and support through this life, to that completion of happiness, proposed as the final reward of the righteous.

BUT how will some be able to prefer a petition to a power in whom they have no trust? who would gladly be possessed of, and are much better pleas'd with, sharing a crown of wicked prosperity in this world, than with the prospect of a crown of pure and perfect felicity, in a state of endless futurity.

O THAT parents would timely and vigilantly exert themselves to raise early impressions in the tender minds of their children, in order to fix deeply the christian doctrine, with all its glorious consequences; firmly persuading and convincing them, that they are under the immediate notice of that Being, who is ever unspeakably good, and gracious; and informing them, that he is clothed with every awful, reverential attribute; as being perfectly wise, powerful and good, yet strictly just; that he is the maker of us all; and that he delights to be called upon by us, with the tender and endearing appellation of, "Our father, who art in heaven."

WHEREFORE, under the deep and reverent sense of the certainty of his continual presence and providence, let us be ever careful, ever earnestly desirous to constitute a part of his children and family, in this our probationary state; that as we, by our rank in the creation, belong to the order of spirits; we may assuredly hope to join the cherubim and seraphim, in the habitations of glory and peace, by our now becoming members of his militant church; and may, when our warfare shall be accomplished, unite with the chorus of his triumphant hosts,

hosts, in the language and tribute of grateful adoration and praise.

AND indeed without this blessed hope, we are of all creatures, the most miserable! being daily surrounded with lamentation and woe! combating with secret or obvious distresses! and encountering, from the cradle to the grave, a perpetual succession and variety of afflictions! We might therefore truly say, if our hopes were only fixed upon the transitory and fleeting pleasures of this life, we should be of all the animal creation, the most miserable! But we are assured, that nothing less than GOD himself, is the infinite and endless reward of all that diligently and constantly solicit him to the following purpose.—*Two things have I required of thee, deny me them not before I die; remove far from me, vanity, and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain!*

WHICH is as if the Prophet had said, “Thou art my father;”
 “the author of my being; I made nothing myself, but am
 “wholly and entirely the offspring of thy power and workman-
 “ship of thy hands: thou knowest therefore what is best and
 “fittest for me; and what can I require else from the hands of
 “thee, O my GOD! than thy preservation out of the dangers of
 “those opposite extremes in life; thy guidance in the middle
 “path of safety and innocence, and the enjoyment of thy ap-
 “probation and favour in my walking therein.”

HIS mind was doubtless deeply impress'd with the awfulness and essential subject of his petition; and *the removing far from him vanity and lies* seems to constitute a very considerable part of it. But too many of us, deviating from this one most important

important point, are daily inclin'd to wander in the broad path of vanity and folly, and prone to mistake it for the path of peace; 'till oftentimes the stroke of adversity, of pain of body, or affliction of mind, convinceth *in part*, and, if unreformed, that of *Death* may *fully* convince us, when too late! of this most fatal mistake.

THE Prophet saw into the propriety of that frame of mind, which utters the language dictated by divine wisdom: * *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding*: inasmuch as his gracious superintendency and merciful notice of his creatures is such as even † *taketh in the ends of the earth*; and daily affordeth us the clearest manifestation of his goodness here, as it hath evidently pointed out to us that glorious path which leads to safety and eternal peace. But *vanity and lies* have too frequently estranged the mind, drawn it off from heavenly objects and heavenly cares, and fix'd its attention upon things wholly unworthy the notice of an immortal spirit. Under the seducing influence of *vanity and lies*, men have been frequently led to pursue many things agreeable to their own wishes and imagined interests, without the least regard paid to justice and equity.

I MAY possibly observe an explanation and distinction of the two states as I go on, which *Agur* seems to refer to, viz. *The distress and misery of the poor*, on the one hand; and the *vanity and pride of heart*, too frequently conspicuous in the rich, on the other.

WERE the lives of men designed to be wholly alienated from a state of justice and virtue, and entirely instructed and fixed in the maxims and manners of this world, singly to be taught
to

† *Isai. xlv. 22.*

* *Prov. 3. iv.*

to consider it as the chief end of their existence, there would then be some excuse for using every species of art in joining * *house to house, and laying field to field, 'till there be no place, that they may be seated as it were alone in the midst of the earth*: but now, as the great design of him who judgeth the earth, and rewardeth the righteous, hath been abundantly manifested and denounced to such as thus counter-act it, they who are intrusted with riches will appear the more inexcusable for their unbounded avarice, and can have nothing to plead in favour of their violation of his plain and clear intentions respecting mankind. It will all at last be found *vanity and lies*, without virtue; without a faithful dedication of their hearts to the revealed will of God. It is an observation of the preacher that † *God giveth to man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy—but to the sinner he giveth travel; to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God*. And though he who is too unmindful of his creator, may have erected edifices that appear to the eye of the spectator as if they would stand for ages, and may call them by his own name; yet even in this view, without virtue, he is, in the sense of *Agur*, a liar to himself: he thinks he hath secured happiness, when the frame of his mind is the reverse of it; fixt probably in a state of exclusion, from what may be justly deemed true and substantial happiness; or any acquisition, which will be acceptable and well-pleasing in the sight of God. In this circumstance therefore he is a liar. The by-stander indeed, who sees him in the free enjoyment of affluence, and taking his ease, in appearance, in the fullness of his heart, may be ready to conclude such a one happy, by being unacquainted with his secret griefs; whereas many of his moments, if their true state could be penetrated into, would appear like those distressed ones of the king of Israel; who, when he was seated in the

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height

* Isa. 5. viii. — † Eccles. 2. xxvi.

height of his splendor, magnificence, and royalty, * *rent his clothes; put on sackcloth, fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.*

LABOUR therefore after righteousness, rather than to † *lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth; where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; that by such timely and prudent application, ye may lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven; where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.*

YE rising youth, whose minds are open to the dictates of ‡ *that wisdom which is from above*, and to the just and tender sentiments which it inspires. Be your enquiries to the following purpose, frequent as they are important, “What am I? “Who made me? To what purpose was I created?” dedicate your moments to the real purposes of life, pay not too great a regard to any prospects or temptations of this world; fix not your attention upon its maxims and proposed interests, which, when they become our idols, do but deceive and deprive us of infinitely greater; beware of being seduced by the out-goings of your own minds; let not things that are transient and perishing gain too great a possession of your hearts and affections; nor ever neglect the following interesting petition, *Remove far from me vanity and lies*, and remember that he is the guide, helper, and director of all them that put their trust in him.

Give me neither poverty nor riches; I readily conclude that in the first part of this petition all would willingly join; but riches are most apt to lay hold of our hearts and affections: many indeed are the promises to the poor, || *Whom the Lord will deliver when he crieth, even him that hath no helper*; they are frequently

* 1 Kings xxi. 27. † Mat. vi. 19. 20. ‡ James iii. 17. || Psal. lxxii. 13.

quently encouraged to hope; while the rich, if they mis-apply the riches committed to their trust, we are assured by divine authority, will be constrained *to weep and howl*: they enjoy the blessing and bounty of Heaven, which they ought to apply to the noblest purposes, particularly the relief of their distressed brethren, * *in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, (saith our Saviour) ye have done it unto me.* For which purpose he hath committed to some a larger share of temporal enjoyments; which ought to be a striking motive, a necessary incitement to well-doing: but alas! instead of it, too frequently wealth becomes subservient to the purposes of pride, luxury, and wickedness: and therefore, our LORD remarks in another place, † *how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven.* And the apostle James says, ‡ *go ye now ye rich men, weep and howl, for your miseries that shall come upon you; your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten; your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you; the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud crieth; the cries of them which have reaped, have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.*

IF the extent of thy stewardship, O man! is increased, thy obligations to thy master are still greater; if thou hast received additional blessings from the God of bounty, it is a trust which calleth upon thee to distribute with an unsparing hand. O then, ye who are thus favoured! maintain a steady endeavour to discharge your duty in the sight of your Creator; deceive not yourselves with a belief that happiness consisteth in the multitude of your possessions, since they bring with them their dangers as well as obligations to duty; but like fountains of water which supply the little streams, || *be ready to distribute,*

B 2

willing

* Mat. xxv. 40. † Mat. xix. 23, 24. Mark x. 23. ‡ James v. 1. || 1 Tim. 17, 18, 19.

willing to communicate: this being the way to lay up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come; that ye may lay hold on eternal life.

I HAVE known some men, and even women, who have thought the ground scarce worthy to receive the pressure of their feet; divested of all the ties and tenderness of humanity, and wholly puffed up with *vanity and lies*; but as the reign of such is short, and not even then without its pains, and *their end miserable*, as in many parts of the sacred records we are assured; may there be none such here present; on the contrary, let it be a part of your constant care, not only to feel the distresses of others, but to visit, and be convinced, and in a manner *share* the necessities of the poor and needy; to soften the anguish of their afflicted minds, to alleviate their hidden griefs, and to dry up the eyes of those that weep; and the tears which stream, “**as faithful stewards of the manifold Grace of God; having fervent charity; knowing that charity shall cover a multitude of sins. Using hospitality one towards another without grudging; in proportion as ye have received the gift, removing far from you vanity and lies; and contenting yourselves with being fed with food that is convenient for you.*”

SOME that are present, may think this unreasonable doctrine, and be ready to reply, “I have a family to provide for, and therefore I must embrace every opportunity of acquiring, and laying up all my acquisitions in store for them; and should I neglect the present, the like may never happen again in the course of my life.”

SUCH or the like arguments are often too readily taken up, and obstinately urged, in opposition to the most important concern; to the unspeakable prejudice of themselves, of the dispositions

* 1 Pet. iv. 8, 9, 10.

dispositions and morals of their children in particular, and of human society in general: how quick is the transition of many from a state of health to the grave! * "*Thou fool! this night shall thy soul be required of thee!*" was formerly pronounced to one of this kind by the great judge of all men. Consider then, it may be thy case; and art thou prepared against thy dying hour, to render him such an account, as will then support thee, and justify thee in thy claim to the inheritance of his everlasting kingdom, by thy having faithfully sought it, and attended to the conditions thereof, preferably to all the dearest objects of this uncertain, and momentary state of existence?

I AM fully of opinion, many who run after the world with open mouth, and that mouth scarce ever clos'd, 'till death closes it; could they be induced to yield some of their precious moments to timely and serious reflection; would endeavour to withdraw themselves from transitory things, at least before their last moments of life; and in some measure, prepare (after this manner) to meet their God.

THEY would now and then retire, for a short space at least, from the world, before they entirely left it; frequently sit down, and seriously turn their view towards another world, another state of being, into which they can never hope to carry wealth, or honours; toward that approaching dread tribunal of righteousness, where these will gain no favour.

WHEN we take a survey of the world, and look back thro' the generations that are past, we see that the love of vanity, wealth, and grandeur, hath prov'd from time to time the ruin even of the fairest *empires* and *monarchies*, which have been ever erected on the face of the earth: *one reformation* after
another,

* Luke xii. 20.

another, and *one state* after another, have been destroy'd, from the *pride and dissipation* inherent in the minds of *governors and teachers*.

How ought this consideration to humble the hearts, and redouble the vigilance of such as are placed in *exalted stations* !

I HOPE and trust our love, as a people in general, hath not been confined peculiarly to ourselves; but extended, as it ought to be, to all our fellow creatures; to relieve poverty and distress, according to our abilities; to prevent and reclaim from the infinite danger and harms of impiety, and to encourage every kind of real virtue.

THOUGH some families may have turn'd aside into the state of the world, and become engrossed with the love of its pleasures and enjoyments; yet many others, I hope, and believe, have denied themselves; have *laid hold of the good word of life*; and under its influence, pursued *the one thing needful*. Tho' some have declined, and even refused, the subjection due to their maker, as if they had asked with insolence, "Who is this LORD, that he should reign over our hearts?" and had added, "We know no power equal to that of getting wealth, and honours;"---yet others have not departed from the obligations of fear and love; but have made proper reflections, paid just respect to the great author of their being; and manifested it by a steady watchfulness in conduct, which I most earnestly desire, may become the happy case of every one of my fellow creatures.

THE present solemn occasion is an important lesson of instruction to us all! The departure of the disembodied soul,
from

from this world, to another ; which methinks should entirely prevent our setting too great a value upon all temporal possessions.

I HAVE sometimes been present in a dying hour ; I have been present at a scene of humbling distress ; I have seen in some, the closing period of a regular life of virtue : yet such a life, as on account of outward poverty, had been despised and over looked---a whole life spent, in which its happiest moments would have past for miserable, in the minds of thousands : yet when they have finished their course, they have experienced triumphant joy, in the blessed hope and assurance of eternal life ! through the merits of their *dear redeemer*.

I HAVE also beheld, on the other hand, the habitations of splendour exhibit a mournful scene of distress, far different from the former ! Then, when the solemn approach of death hath begun to appear, attended with all its tremblings and fearful apprehensions of an after state ! when the soul, agonizing in its pains, hath viewed things in a far different light to what it had before done, when even the riches, in which it had long trusted, fell short of giving the least satisfaction : no hope of future happiness afforded to the possessor ! but, on the contrary, a gloomy prospect of despair ; of an eternal state of misery ! of this have I been made a sorrowful witness, that some have gone out of the world, * *without God ; without hope ; without one comfortable reflection from the sacred ransom of a dying saviour !*

In vain have they ardently wished, in an expiring hour, that they might have been permitted to lengthen out their allotment of life, a little longer ; that they might have but a short space of added time afforded them, for the important purpose

* Eph. ii. 12.

purpose of repentance, and amendment of life ; for *feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, and visiting the sick* ; virtues, to which they had no pretence, in any of their past hours, and which then it proved too late for them to attain, however necessary, for their standing approved at the just judgment, to which they were approaching.

MAY we all therefore learn instruction, from examples like these ; and derive such advantage from this present solemnity ; seeking and embracing *the good word of life* ; and ever steadfastly adhering to it, so long as we continue in mutability.

MAY we never withdraw ourselves, from watchful attention, to the guidance of divine providence ; never indulge ourselves in arrogance, or trust too much to the rectitude of our own hearts ; but * *pray without ceasing*, that we may be enabled to † *do works meet for repentance* ; and thereby attain an eternal inheritance in the kingdom of God !

ONCE more suffer me to intreat you, my friends, in great good will, often seriously to reflect upon the importance of the petition which I have thus far endeavoured to enforce---“ *Two things have I required of thee, O Lord ! deny me them not before I die.*” As I am fully satisfied it is not and will not be sufficient for me, though I should stand ever so eminently high, on the account of riches, or honors, in the esteem or applause of men ; “ *Remove therefore, far from me vanity and lies ; giving me neither poverty nor riches ; but feed me, I pray thee, with food convenient for me, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord ? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.*”

EVER

* 1 Theff. v. 17. † Mat. iii. 8.

EVER beware of the first admission of evil. Guard the avenues of your hearts; make it your peculiar study so to *number your days*, as to * *apply your hearts unto wisdom*; and to advance therein keep the account of your passing moments with greater exactness than you would wish to do of your most important temporal concerns.

'TIS an usual saying, *That short reckonings make long friends*: continue this short and frequent reckoning; ever esteeming *the numbering of your days aright*, to be the most necessary and blessed exercise; that hereby ye may be in a continual readiness for your final removal, how sudden soever it may be permitted.

SOME of you are doubtless truly sensible of the importance of thus acquiring the divine favour; continue to * *keep your hearts* in this frame *with all diligence, for out of them proceed the issues of life*: remember too that as we are a people who have been frequently blamed for departing from set forms, how necessary therefore it is for us all to keep up, in the very innermost recesses of our hearts, the daily sacrifices of prayer and praise, of fervent mental supplications, reverently to offer them to the † *Father who seeth in secret and rewardeth openly*: and let us never forget, that if the mind once gets off its guard, and relaxes in its earnest pursuit of the divine favour, the enemy is then most watchful to enter and to seduce. May you all therefore keep within the verge of innocence; and ever let your morning oblations, and evening sacrifices, accompany your spirits to the throne of grace.

YE rising tender youth, of whom there is a number in this city, for whose welfare I am at this time, and believe shall ever remain, anxiously solicitous:

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MAY

* Psal. xc. 12. † Prov. iv. 23. ‡ Math. vi. 6.

MAY grace, mercy and peace, attend you through the succeeding steps of your lives! May the Father of infinite mercy still accompany your spirits! May you live in the perfect love and fear of him; making constant, daily enquiry into your immortal states; always remembering that you must one day fall beneath the stroke of death! May your evening and morning sacrifices, therefore, of fervent prayer, and of a sincere and stedfast devotion, be constantly directed up to your Creator! Assuring yourselves that in casting your care upon, and trusting in him; he will remember you in his divine love; that he will * *remove vanity and lies far from you, and feed you with food convenient for you; that in blessing he will bless you; and in multiplying he will multiply his favours toward you; crowning you in the end † with joy unspeakable, and full of glory!*

To conclude, let us all treasure up in our minds, and firmly retain this comfortable assurance, *Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily there is a God, that judgeth in the earth.*

* Gen. xxii. 17.

† Pet. i. 8.

The fol-

The following PRAYER was delivered, before the conclusion of the meeting, by the same Preacher.

I T is unto Thee, the author of all our mercies, thou most glorious and holy one! that we presume to have recourse; and with the deepest humility and resignation of mind, to acknowledge thy present blessings, and the diffusion of thy wisdom and goodness, with gratitude, reverence and feeling submission! As Thou best knowest what is best for us, we beg that we may be continually favour'd with thy providential and fatherly dispensations; and with that mercy which sanctifies them, which renders them most highly instructive and useful to us: that hence we may enjoy inward peace in the time of outward trouble: we beseech Thee thus to carry on and compleat our sanctification and salvation, that in thy appointed time, we may attain an * *an endless inheritance with the saints in light.*

WE humbly request that † *all things may work together for good to those* that are afflicted: may they profitably listen to the instructive voice of affliction; and those who enjoy prosperity, alike improve, from the language of every mercy!

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ESTABLISH

* Col. i. 12. † Rom. viii. 28.

ESTABLISH us, we pray Thee, upon the holy immoveable foundation of thy ever-blessed and unchangeable truth ; Thou that hast been with us, and remember'd us ; and hast open'd our hearts for thy admission, through the virtue of thy heavenly power and divine love. We pray Thee, in the name and spirit of thy dear son, to direct us in the several succeeding steps of our lives ; to preserve us in an humble dependance and holy trust in thy power : and may we be continually favour'd to make mention of thy name with joy and gladness of heart.

LAY thy hand, we pray Thee, upon such as are captivated *with vanity and lies*, before they depart hence, and be seen of men no more ; to lead them * *out of darkness into thy marvellous light* : let the voice of the holy spouse reach the immortal part, in such, with that comfortable and refreshing language, " Arise my love, my fair one come away." Lead them, we pray, yet further and further, in the † *path of righteousness*, to ‡ *the perfecting of holiness in thy fear* ; and let *thy rod and thy staff*, evermore, § *comfort them* therein ; that they may not *lag behind, as in the wilderness* ; but in humble steady obedience, *persevere, with holy circumspection* ; being thankful for all thy providential distributions, and ever patiently pronouncing the divine language of *Thy will be done !*

ENABLE thy ministers, with power and authority, to exalt thy name with additional strength ; that through their faithful labours, as instruments in thy hand, thy sacred light may arise and abundantly spread upon the habitations of darkness ! O most gracious being ! Thou that § *workest in us to will and to do, according to thy good pleasure*, we pray Thee, bring all
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* 1 Pet. ii. 9. † Prov. viii. 20. ‡ 2 Cor. ii. 1. || Psal. 23. 4. § Phil. ii. 13.

to thy temple; and enable them acceptably to worship Thee therein. Humble their hearts in full obedience to thy word, * *lead them in the way everlasting!* Let the first dawn of their morning, the whole course of their day, and the close of their evening, be continually directed towards Thee!

O THOU! by whom the voice of supplication, is with all readiness admitted, even from the unworthiest of thy creatures! grant that over sea and land, † *the dead in heart, in trespasses and sins*, may hear thy word, feel its power in ‡ *raising them to newness of life*, and be finally admitted to the fellowship and communion of saints in thy kingdom!

FOR thy great name's sake, and for thy dear Son's sake, remember all the inhabitants of this city; and those, in particular, that are now met in this place: that, through the favour of thy light and help, they may move in their several classes agreeable to the injunctions of thy holy word. Do Thou, we pray Thee, animate and preserve thy ministers, elders, and heads of families; may they || *be sober, and hope to the end*; discharging their duties to Thee, themselves, their households, and the public; having on § *the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, and sword of the spirit*; and having their feet shod, with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

SPEAK peace, we beseech Thee, O sovereign author of peace! to all that ** *are labouring and heavy laden*; † *tossed and not comforted*; still the perturbations of their minds, when arising and swelling, like the raging waves of the sea; ‡ *though the waves toss and roar, let them not prevail and pass over them*.

Now

* Psal. cxxxix. 24. † Eph. ii. 1. ‡ Rom. vi. 4. || 1 Pet. i. 13. § Eph. vi. 15, 16, 17. ** Mat. xi. 28. † Isai. liv 11. || Jer. v. 22.

Now to Thee, whose goodness, mercy, and marvellous power, the tongues and thoughts of the most grateful and perfect of thy creatures here below, have ever fallen short of expressing or conceiving; to Thee, with the immaculate lamb, the son of thy bosom, be deservedly and justly ascribed, as is most due, all honour and glory through the succeeding pilgrimage of our lives; and when we shall no longer remain sojourners here upon earth, may we be admitted to continue the inexhaustible theme, in the boundless habitations of thy everlasting glory, world without end. *Amen.*

The

The following Sermon was preached at the Quarterly Meeting at French-Hay, near Bristol, May 26, 1767, in the morning.

* *A garden inclosed is my sister, my Spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain seal'd.*

 HE whole book of Canticles is understood and taken in the way of similitude, or metaphor, setting forth that close connection, that near and dear relation, which eternally subsists between CHRIST and his church; and in this sense it certainly conveys instruction, very profitable, as well as very delightful, to that mind which hath dedicated itself to the love and obedience of him, its only rightful LORD.

† *The Church is called a fountain of Gardens; which seems to me very evidently to imply that inclosed collected strength, beauty, regularity; those consolatory refreshments; that steady firmness of thought, unity of heart, and divine affection, which becomes a people that well understand what is meant by the solemn injunction of ‡ girding up the loins of their minds: well apprized of the state of their pilgrimage; of the nature, end and design of their being; of the necessity of § watchfulness unto prayer; of having their minds brought into, and established in, the lovely order of the gospel; their loins girded; their faculties circumscribed, and directed to the proper purpose, the great and*

* Cant. iv. 12. † iv. 15. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 13. § 1 Pet. iv. 7.

and glorious end of their being ; within the limits of that holy frame of mind, which hath * *a fountain of gifts*, preparatory to every kind of useful service, for the comfort of individuals, and the united benefit of the whole body ; ever abiding in the † *fear of the Lord*, which is *the beginning of wisdom* : the most perfect wisdom, by which the mind is kept clean, and preserved in its proper cloathing.

FOR *the Fear of the Lord*, as the Psalmist expresses it, † *is clean, and endureth for ever* : and if this fear continues to rest upon our minds, it will assuredly keep them clean ; and more and more illuminate them to discern the propriety and fitness of this language of CHRIST to his church : *A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse, my church* ; erected and preserved by *my power* my followers united to me, and all dear to one another, § “ *a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*”

MAY we therefore all separately, each for ourselves, attend to this state, and become acquainted with that degree of resemblance of such an inclosed garden which we bear, in the sight of him, who at one view, sees the several conditions of men, and beholds the state of his whole creation !

IF we are inclosed, of what nature is our inclosure ? since nothing less will become our sufficient defence, than the surrounding arm of the Almighty ! He is the strength of every individual that rightly trusts in him : Their situation is aptly described in *holy writ*, in many parts of it, by a variety of lively and beautiful figures ; as here, by that of *a garden inclosed*, or || *fountain of gardens*. They likewise joyfully experience, in this

* Prov. i, 7, and 9, 10. † James iii, 13, &c. ‡ Psalm xix, 9. § 1 Pet. ii. 9. || Cant. iv. 15.

this sense of the text, what was meant by the song that was predicted to be sung in the land of *Judah*, when the divine covenant should happily cement, and inclose that favour'd people in a state of innocence, integrity and love, enjoying together the lasting and unutterable sweets of divine protection and peace. * *In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; we have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks*: and I cannot but entreat that all present, who are come to years of mature consideration, especially, may obey the call of God; come out of a state of sin, and neglect of duty, and become † *fellow-citizens with the saints* of this city; a city that hath ‡ *sure foundations*; being built upon *that rock*, which § *the gates of hell* have never been able to prevail against.

O you that are in the bloom of life, and surrounded with the impetuous waves of divers passions; who continue yet uncorrected, unrefined by divine grace; may you diligently and seriously reflect upon your extream want of resemblance to *the garden inclosed*; and of answering thereby the gracious design of your maker concerning you! May you be directed || *by the still small voice*, which the LORD GOD will make use of, and meet you with ** *in the garden*; in order to reclaim you, and to draw you to himself! May all that stand in slippery places, make him their refuge, that they may know him, to calm every tumult in the mind; to crown them with the joys of obedience; and to direct their steps aright thro' life, to his honour, and their own true and lasting happiness!

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MAY

* Isaiah xxvi, 1. † Eph. ii, 19. ‡ Heb. xi, 14. § Mat. xvi, 18.
 || 1 Kings, xix, 12. ** Gen. iii, 8.

MAY all who mourn for want of a place of rest, attain this happy situation, all who are ready to cry out as one formerly did, * "*Woe is me that I sojourn in Meshech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar.*" Woe is me for this state of wickedness, with which I am now on every side surrounded; both that of my own, and that of others round about me! who are ready to fear + *the harvest is past, the summer is ended: and that they are not gathered into the city walled with salvation; or the garden inclosed with divine beauty, with united and unfading joy!*

I HOPE better things for those whose concern sometimes appears likely to become more than they are able to bear, even a concern, lest they should be excluded from an inheritance with the sanctified.

HE that of old made † *the mountains skip like rams, and the little hills like lambs*, for the miraculous preservation of his people, even when they had begun to despair of their deliverance; can still equally effect the like glorious work in restoring the desponding, the broken in heart; that, having been too much off their watch, have from thence been the more subject to be § *toft about by every wind of doctrine*, and cunning craftiness of men; whereby they lie in wait to deceive. Know that though your own resolutions, your own strength, and wisdom, have been insufficient (in the days that are past) for your security; and perhaps the strongest resolutions, that you have hitherto made, have been written in dust; so that the next gale of temptation hath blown them away; and you have hence been carried further and further, into a state of groaning captivity, and crying distress! and have been unable

* Psalm cxx, 5: † Jer. viii. ‡ Psalm cxiv, 4: § Eph. iv. 12.

able to lift up your heads in the day of trial : know, that the duly humble and repenting sinner hath ever been graciously receiv'd ; and the diffident have become cloathed with divine strength, through the name and power of the LORD JESUS ; their minds have been brought into a holy frame, having entered within the celestial inclosure and defence.

O that the salvation of Israel would come out of Sion, then should Jacob rejoice, and Israel should be right glad. This hath been the sacred language of individuals that have at times been tost in uncertainty, distressed in vanity, wickedness and disappointment ; who, notwithstanding, have been at last happily fixed within the habitation of *the holy city, or garden inclosed* ; through a steady perseverance and strong resistance, though in the night season ; like Jacob, who as a prince, ** prevailed with God and with men.* So the sincere, the penitent sinner, in his resolute and patient conflict, imploring and relying on divine help, will at length obtain an assured victory, to his great joy, and returning of thanksgiving to the author of all his mercies.

A Garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse ; ah, too unthinking youth ! how widely different from this state is too many of your's ! To you appears particularly applicable that antient call from GOD, *† Keep silence before me, ob ye islands !* I beseech you, in this your time of danger, when your minds may be compared to floating islands, blown upon and cover'd with a succession of waves, surrounded with temptations of various kinds, that are perpetually withdrawing you from that most precious interest, which CHRIST hath purchased

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for

* Gen. xxxii, 28.

† Isaiah xli, i.

for you in *the garden inclosed*; I beseech you, that you maintain a steady dependance upon him; that ye be vigilant in your pursuit after eternal enjoyments; that ye stand upon your guard against the wiles of the grand enemy to your salvation; remembering that even * *when the sons of God have met together, Satan hath presented himself amongst them.*

DO THY mind watch with holy diligence to prayer? being fervent in spirit, that though the enemy may endeavour to come in as a flood of corruption, and seek incessantly to draw thee from the strong hold of that city, † *whose walls are salvation, and whose gates are praise*; the arm of omnipotence may defend thee: know, thou art no farther guilty than as thou joineest with the temptation; it is no sin to be tempted; the holy everlasting bridegroom of the true church, was himself tried, proved, tempted before thee, time after time, by *the ruler of the darkness of this world, the prince of the power of the air*; yet he continued unmoved, unwearied; being supported and sustained by the power of GOD: ‡ *He was like unto us in all things, sin only excepted*; he knows and is willing to sustain them that are tempted; and to encourage in the day of battle, every one that cleaveth unto, and calleth upon him, with full purpose of heart, in the whole course and conduct of his life: though he may be deeply proved, and may sometimes be ready to cry out, “Even though the gates of death, “ may appear to be in motion against me, and just opening to “ receive me, yet if I die, Oh let it be at thy feet.”

THIS hath been the language of minds, in the day of temptation; and when the battle hath been hot, they have known a secret hiding place, where the enemy could not prevail. Though he encountered the whole army of martyrs; though they

* Job i, 6. † Isaiah lx. 18. ‡ Heb. iv, 15.

they were tempted, trod upon, buffeted and even crucified; yet it was never in his power to subdue them; they were still succour'd by the hand of the almighty; they were enabled to * *fight the good fight of faith*; to pass through all their *fiery trials* with patience; and, in honour of their victory, are now *crowned with glory*!

How beautiful, how amiable, must be *those gardens inclosed*, the rising youth, in the vigour and prime of life! when their minds are circumscribed, and animated to piety; when they have upon them the indubitable proofs of the handy work of God; standing immoveably upright on the side of religion and virtue; keeping out all the works of darkness, by walls of divine erection!

How excellent are these gardens inclosed! their conversation and behaviour, how edifying! how exemplary! how truly honourable! their admission is *sure* into † *that glorious house*, not made with hands, to a perpetual festival, an eternal fruition of the unspeakably rich rewards of their good works, which they have been enabled to perform, to the glorifying of their father who is in heaven.

THAN such a blessed society as this, I know of nothing that can possibly be deemed more amiable upon the face of the earth; nothing more consistent with the design of *heaven*; or more resembling *its own* happiness, for those that are young ‡ *to remember their creator in the days of their youth*, with a continual reverence; and to give up their hearts to him, in the perfection of love; for the most desirable part of the whole creation to live thus, amidst the bloom and lustre of the spring time of life, is to constitute the *beauty of holiness*! the one great ornament of *the garden of the LORD* here on earth!

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* 1 Tim. vi, 12. † 2 Cor. v. 1. ‡ Eccles. xii, 1

YE heads of families; fathers, mothers, and guardians, that preside over and sustain the various relations in domestic life; ever carefully prosecute your own eternal happiness, and the happiness of all those over whom you are placed in charge! exhorting them in tender affection, and encouraging them by worthy example, to * *set their affections on things above*; watchfully guarding, and even confining them, in order to preserve them from all harms and corruptions of vice, *as gardens inclosed* within the limits of that holy fear, † *which is a fountain of life, that preserves from the snares of death*, and prepares for a crown of glory, in the regions of eternal felicity!

WHEN the ties of nature become join'd with the ties of grace, and together rest upon the minds of parents and guardians; they cannot but be solicitous that their offspring and charge may be favoured in an eminent degree with divine preservation: they would then earnestly desire to help them forward in their way, being qualified to say to the rising generation, "Follow me as I follow CHRIST." I am persuaded had this been more generally the case, had they themselves, I say, really lived *as gardens inclosed* within the bounds of divine wisdom and government, our christian society would have worn a different aspect to what it now does. Could parents and heads of families from time to time have appealed to the searcher of hearts for the uprightness of their intentions, and the rectitude of their conduct in these most important concerns, then might they have said with holy confidence, ‡ *Lord! now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!*

WHAT think ye parents? ye that live as it were in a state of stupefaction; what think ye of the important moment, when in the sight of God, angels, and men, inquisition for blood

* Col. iii, 2. † Prov. xiii, 14. ‡ Luke ii, 29, 30.

blood shall be made; what think ye of the preparation of rendering that account with joy, at the dread tribunal of final judgment? in which an enquiry into the discharge of your several duties, in this respect, will most assuredly be made! ---It is possible, and indeed I cannot but believe it consistent with the goodness of the supreme being; that, where the natural parents have been negligent in their discharge of this important trust, and have conducted their offspring into by-ways and crooked paths, forgetful of the way that leadeth to life eternal; the everlasting father hath not been wholly unmindful of his children, thus abandoned to the wiles of the destroyer; but hath frequently reached forth a kind hand to such, and will continue to make up to them, who gratefully receive his kindness, and obey his voice, the deficiency of such past parental care; even by the virtue of his living power in their hearts: in the mean time, the very criminal neglect of such parents will, notwithstanding this, draw down on them its own weight of condemnation: * *the hand writing on the wall* will still remain against them; and, like wicked *Belsazzar*, they will be *weighed in the ballance, and found wanting*.

INDEED it must be confessed, and I am thoroughly assured, that all parents are not thus negligent: I cannot but remember the inestimable father I had in early life; and above all things, his almost *unexampled care and tenderness over his infant offspring*. I well remember the very powerful and moving eloquence of descending tears! when he collected his numerous family of little ones about him, and in the time of our extream tenderness, and very early years, how often he hath wept over us, when he hath been recommending us to the throne of grace! though I cannot repeat the immediate lan-
guage

* Dan. v. 5, 27.

guage he utter'd, upon these occasions, which were so extremely interesting to us all !

I WANDERED, as to myself indeed I may say, and strayed from the *garden inclosed*, in many of the succeeding steps of my life : and even now stand *as a monument of mercy amongst you!* whilst I thus afresh remember and recite this amazing instance of a tender parent's anxious and unabated care, for our preservation out of the evils that abound in the world ; for our having a safe place within the inclosures, where * *Christ feedeth his flock, and maketh them to rest at noon!*

O FATHERS and mothers ! I beseech you, by the mercies of God, and the solemn account you must one day close with him ; that you lay this charge seriously to heart ; still offering up your humble petitions to the *Father of light*, that he will enable you, more and more, to instruct the children he hath bless'd you with, in *the one thing needful* ; in order that being thus favour'd, thus enlightened and enlarged by his power, you may have nothing to do but die, when that time shall arrive ; nothing to charge yourselves with, in relation to the neglect of this great duty, when the measure of your days shall be accomplish'd ; but may render up your accounts *with joy*, and receive the beatific sentence of † *Well done good and faithful servant ; thou hast been faithful in a little ; I will make thee ruler over more ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

A Garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse.—May we pay all due honour to the testimony of CHRIST respecting his church, both as individuals, as heads of families and parents of children : and more and more sustain with diligence and propriety in all our

* Cant. i. 7. † Mat. xxv. 21.

our several stations the character of gardens inclosed, or be *as plants therein*, of the *Lord's own right hand planting*; plentifully adorn'd and enrich'd with all the good fruits of his own spirit; that we may be, as our fathers were in the day, when the LORD rais'd them up, fed, and miraculously supported them! and may fervently pray, * *that Sion might arise, and shine, and shake herself from the dust of the earth; and put on her beautiful garments!* and that many amongst us, who yet need it, might shake themselves from those outward things that adorn them; as *they* vainly imagine, that *that divine beauty and lustre* which once conspicuously shined upon and adorned *our Sion*, may again be restored, and continue to dwell amongst us: and in order to this, may we study more and more the increase of righteousness and true holiness; encouraging one another by good example and by tender counsel in the pursuit thereof; as we cannot, consistent with our love of God, be indifferent in our wishes for the happiness and welfare of any of our fellow creatures; nor say of our brother, "Let him alone, leave him to himself, it is sufficient for me to mind myself." Since it is our immediate duty to watch over him; and to be ready, on every occasion, tenderly to advise and assist, to prevent or support him; and not answer the LORD, when he shall require an account of his welfare from me; † *Am I my brother's keeper?*

At this door, my friends, unspeakable damage hath enter'd, and widely spread amongst us as a people; even through this neglect, the grand deceiver hath the more easily broke into this and the other family; the power of seduction hath taken place; and many young people may be said to have laid violent hands on their own souls, and those of others too, in their gradual stepping out of the *garden inclosed*.

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* Isai. lii. 1, 2. lx. 1. † Gen. iv. 6.

“ *Am I my brother's keeper?* What have I to do with the welfare of another?” This hath greatly obstructed the increase of our felicity, as a collective body; the progress of our Sion; and introduced the destroyer; who hath broke into our inclosure, and made a sorrowful devastation among the flock and family of God. Where I see thus the danger of the hedge (*which the Lord in mercy made about us!*) being broke down; I cannot help expressing my concern, and using my speedy and vigilant efforts to prevent, as much as possible, the beginning and increase of so great an evil.

Is there even a servant lad, or a servant girl that hath continued neglected, and their minds left to wander at will? I cannot but feel for them, with an earnest desire of informing such, and drawing them, if possible, within the limits of the garden inclosed; that they might enjoy the benefit and delightful assurance of immortal happiness, from their entrance into, and continuance in well doing! Many fly from their own interest, forget the God that made them, and even † *account the blood of the covenant as an unholy thing*, for want of having their minds properly centered, and their judgments duly enlightened; and therefore it is all your duty, who are advanced within the heavenly bounds, and are grown up into a capacity of service, so faithfully to improve your talents, that ye may become instrumental, to enlighten their understanding, and to administer to them a suitable degree of spiritual health: not to say, *Am I my brother's keeper?* but *if ye love God, to love your brother also*; to lead him within the heritage and limits of the inclosed garden; within the *impregnable defence of that city whose walls are salvation*.

I KNOW well, friends, that tho' my education was within
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† Heb. x. 29.

the garden inclosed, yet I wandered far from it; and in my departing, laid myself open to the enemy of my soul. I kept the worst of company; I subjected myself to almost every temptation; broke through the fence of the sacred inclosure! trampled it under my feet! and when for a time I found the least inclination to do good, evil was present with me! and I went on from one degree of it to another! my wickedness so far increased with my diligence that at length, alas! I beheld the strong wall broken down! the garden wall destroyed! the mound left defenceless! and no hopes left of returning peace to my afflicted soul!

O YE, who are the hopes of the next generation! the steps I have trod warrant me to expostulate with, and to warn you of the most dreadful danger of that deviation, to which youth is too prone, for want of due and timely reflection, suitable to its vast importance; and the extream difficulty of treading back, or extricating yourselves from it, when the mind is once engaged and enter'd into the path of folly: believe me, now is your acceptable time; now is the day of the LORD's tender mercy afforded to you: flatter not yourselves therefore with the hope of its being time enough, that in some future part of your lives you will diligently seek him: now is your seed time; your hour of profitable diligence; and not in the decline of life. Life frequently is held by a moment of time! it passes, and man is no more seen! * *All flesh is grass, and its beauty as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, and the flower fadeth.* The grave, to which we are all hastening, ought to be an early lesson of serious instruction, sounding the alarm in the ears of every youth; seeing it is frequently open'd to receive its victims in the very bloom of life; and *before the years draw nigh, in which, in the course of nature, they can take no pleasure*

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—boast

* Isa. xl. 6. † Eccles. xii. 1.

---* *boast not therefore thyself of to morrow, since thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*; but rather let the example of others teach thee, the absolute necessity of improving the present moments; and duely to reflect upon the imminent danger of delay.

If thy delight be not now within the *garden inclosed*, thou canst not reasonably expect hereafter to do † *works meet for repentance*: believe me, the evening hour will have its fill of work, even after discharging the duty of the most diligent day; though thou begin this necessary work immediately, thou wilt not have a moment to spare when thy sands of life are hastening to a close, and thou art finally appointed to tread the silent and solemn path of death! which is an hour that will, doubtless, bring with it a sufficient employment to the most serious mind, and to the most assiduous improver of the time that hath been allotted him in mutability.

O THEN, ye beloved youth! that your minds may be thus properly exercised to lay hold on the things that belong to your everlasting peace! may you lay these reflections seriously to heart; and may their good effects demonstrate that they have a powerful and proper influence upon your conduct, through the whole series of your lives; that ye may finish your course with joy! and be crown'd in the end with glory and immortality! having faithfully answer'd the boundless love of CHRIST to his church, whose peculiar relation to himself he expresseth in this endearing language, *A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.*

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* Prov. xxvii. 1. † Acts xxvi. 20.

The following PRAYER likewise was delivered extempore, after the preceding Discourse, by the same eminent speaker.



E approach thy presence, O Father of infinite kindness, and make mention of thy name, in a deep and awful sense of thy mercy, which hath followed us from time to time, and most graciously encouraged us, even to open our hearts before thee! the LORD of heaven, and the whole earth!

WE were *cast upon rocks*, and there left in a destitute and perishing state; when thou manifested thy tender regard, stretched forth thy delivering hand, and fed and sustained us by thy watchful providence! Thou wast pleased to look upon us in mercy, in the days of our temporal calamities! to reveal to us the saving arm of thy power, and to cause those very calamities to turn to our solid advantage! Thou, who art encircled with light, didst enlighten our darkness; gave us clearly to understand the great things of thy law; such of them as thou in thy wisdom saw necessary for us. In the day of our utmost need, thou wast pleased to appear for us, and to speak *comfort* to our afflicted states!

WE earnestly beg, that the grateful sense of all these thine unutterably kind dealings with us, may be imprinted on our hearts in *characters never to be obliterated*! What more have we to ask, but that thou may ever continue to guide and direct us! that such a sense of thy unmerited mercies may be to us, as often heretofore it hath been, an enlivening comfort, and a strong support in the day of trouble: and we beseech thee, O blessed father! to remember all in the like situation:
send

send forth *thy light and thy truth* even amongst those who have never known, or have long forgotten thee. We pray thee, draw them into thy holy house ; plant them in thine inclosed, for ever beautiful and most excellent garden ! their hearts becoming hereby powerfully inclined to attend with a fixed and unlimited submission, to the salutary discipline of thine omnipresent, and unerring wisdom !

IF thou see any cast upon the bed of languishing, do thou be pleased, we humbly pray thee, to afford them the visitation of thy love : let thy divine consolation be their continual attendant, whereby they may be indued with perfect resignation to thy blessed will !

O THOU ! that hast poured into our hearts, the fresh and reviving sense of thy unbounded love ; accept we beseech thee, our prayers for our own preservation, and the lifting up of our hands for one another, for the gathering together of many to thy self ; who art, and hast been, the restorer of many that have been *scattered abroad*, that have *gone astray*, being seduced by various temptations, from thy *sacred truth*.

FOR thy great name's sake, for thy dear son's sake, and for the sake of thy glorious cause of righteousness ! we pray thee, remember the offspring of thy people ; incline and strengthen them more, and more, to turn towards thee ; and *to run the race that is set before them* ; that in the places of the honourable fathers, removed to thy kingdom, may succeed their sons ; steadily walking in their footsteps, to the glory of thy name ; that generation to generation may tell thy acts, and age to age pronounce thy goodness and marvelous power ; who, through manifold *temptations and trials*, preservest *unspotted from the world*

world, them who trust in thee, and adhere to the dictates of thy grace !

BE with the people assembled here at this time ; and in a particular manner with those that are thine in heart, and dedicated to thy service. Endue, we pray thee, with the spirit of sound judgment, *those that sit in judgment* ; and strengthen those who are enlisted into thine army, *engaged under thy banner, and that turn the battle to the gate*, that they may so act, and * *so fight the good fight of faith*, as to lay hold on eternal life ! which thou art now, in this the day of thy mercy, freely offering unto all !

MAY the ministers and stewards of thy word, chearfully proceed in thy glorious cause, speaking powerfully in wisdom to all, that many may become through their calls, yet more and more ardently inclined to listen to the doctrine of thy son, and to be instructed in thy law immediately from his internal voice in their own hearts.

O HOLY and infinite father of all our mercies ! grant we beseech thee, that being preserved in our stations, as those who are *† risen with Christ*, *our affections may be set on things which are above*, and our life hid with them in thee our God, that *when he who is our life shall appear, we also may appear with him in glory* !

MAY all our faculties, and all that is within us, bless thy great and excellent name ; may we perpetually approach thy throne with confidence, to offer thee the oblation of humble prayer, and grateful praise and thanksgiving, now, henceforth, and for ever, world without end ! *Amen.*

* 1 Tim. vi. 12.

† Coloss. iii, 1, 2, 3, 4.

F I N I S.

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